

What is Computer Science?

Well, we now live in a digital world, and, of course this conference is about schools, so what does that mean for schools?

Well, we teach kids at school about the physical world; so we teach them physics.
We teach them about the chemical world, so we teach them Chemistry.

They all live in a Digital World so they need to understand how it works so Computer Science as regards what goes on in schools, is that it should teach kids 'How stuff works'; more than that it should actually teach them 'Why it works' and most importantly of all it should teach them how to make the stuff for themselves.

How did the British Computer Society get involved with CAS?

Well the BCS got involved a few years ago. We've always had a range of qualifications that are around Digital Literacy but one of the things we've realised is that now it's incredibly important that we get Computer Science in schools to complement what we're doing around the Digital Literacy stuff.

We found out about CAS about three years ago through Simon Humphries and Simon PJ (Simon Peyton Jones) we got involved and we've just supported it to the hilt as much as we can.

It's the teachers in school that make things happen, it's the teachers that are going to make the difference. Even there are huge things going on around Michael Gove approving a new *statutory* Programme of Study at all key stages for ICT and that he has said in public how much he wants Computer Science to be in there with Information Technology and Digital Literacy none of that can happen without the teachers.

And it's the excitement and enthusiasm and just real *energy* that this conference creates which makes sure that we can actually deliver on the promises all the rest of us go around making all the time.

Why has CAS been so successful?

Since Michael Gove stood up and gave his amazing speech at BETT where he said that:

"Computer Science is an intellectually challenging rigorous subject that every child should have a chance to learn",

the CAS membership has doubled.

Just in over the last six months just about a thousand teachers have attended 40 different events or workshops organised through CAS it's absolutely astounding, it's just phenomenal.

Where do you see CAS going?

I think they're going to take the world over...

What's happening is that we've reached a real tipping point.

Suddenly government departments and agencies see CAS as a body of real expertise that knows stuff. They also see them as a group that can deliver on the ground, it's not just a campaign, it's a group that can create change; that can implement change in schools. That is incredibly valuable.

Universities, now, are tremendously excited because there is a subject called Computer Science *in schools*, or will be from this year (2012) and next year, so that's made the universities tremendously excited about wanting to help with schools and who do they look to to get that support - CAS - because CAS are there and they've been doing that work for the last three years.

Similarly with industry, now, I chat to a lot of people from a host of different industries and they are all beginning to notice CAS, so it has reached a tipping point on every level right across the board.

So I think the membership for CAS will become extremely large over the next few years; more importantly it's going to have the capacity and the capability to achieve even more *in schools for kids* which is what really matters.

Why is CAS so popular?

Is it because it is "bottom up"?

Precisely, this is *absolutely* a "grass roots" organisation, as everybody says:

"There is no *them*, there is only *us*," it's what we do and we are doing 'one hell of a lot' and it is fantastic to see happening. And *because* of that other people are drawn into it because they want to do stuff too.

If you see an organisation that is basically a can-do, go-get-'em organisation that's going to jolly well change the world you want to be part of that and that's what CAS does and that's what CAS says to everybody; it's what it gets so much excitement from companies and organisations and individuals and schools and universities and governments as well.